

# WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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December 2, 2009

Martha Crusius, Project Manager  
National Park Service  
San Gabriel Special Resource Study  
Park Planning and Environmental Compliance  
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, CA 94607

## **Comments on the Preliminary Alternative Concepts for the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Study Area**

Dear Ms. Crusius:

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) offers the following comments on the National Park Service's (NPS) San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study.

While all three of the Alternative Concepts outlined in Newsletter 4 (August 2009) offer benefits, we believe that a fourth alternative that incorporates the entire Study Area into a new National Recreation Area (NRA), managed in accordance with the framework outlined in Alternative Concept C, would provide the maximum public benefit.

The existing public open space and currently unprotected lands in the Study Area represent some of the most important natural habitat in an otherwise densely populated urban and suburban environment. The more inclusive approach would not only provide significant recreational opportunities, but also would allow for the preservation of invaluable wildlife corridors between pockets of habitat that are in danger of being permanently isolated.

Falling short of the inclusion of the entire Study Area into the new NRA, the next best alternative would be the inclusion of the area depicted in Alternative Concept B. While it could potentially omit highly sensitive habitat areas, it would still incorporate some important habitat linkages. Most significantly for this agency, it is the only alternative that formally includes the Puente-Chino Hills wildlife corridor that would connect the San Gabriel Mountains and River watershed with the Santa Ana Mountains and Cleveland National Forest. That would be a major unprecedented accomplishment in the second largest metropolitan area

National Park Service  
San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Study Area  
December 2, 2009  
Page 2

of the United States.

It is also of paramount importance that the management of these lands is spearheaded by NPS, in cooperation with other local public agencies. WCCA's experience is that the most effective and flexible way to acquire, manage, and preserve public open space lands is through the cooperative effort of interested public agencies with a common set of goals. We believe that NPS's leadership and expertise in this area would prove to be invaluable. We applaud the National Park Service's recognition of the biological importance of both the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente-Chino Hills.

If you have any questions for our agency, please contact Paul Edelman of our staff at 310-589-3200, ext. 128. This agency is enthusiastic about moving forward with these plans and we look forward to working with you to implement our shared vision.

Sincerely,

Glenn Parker  
Chairperson